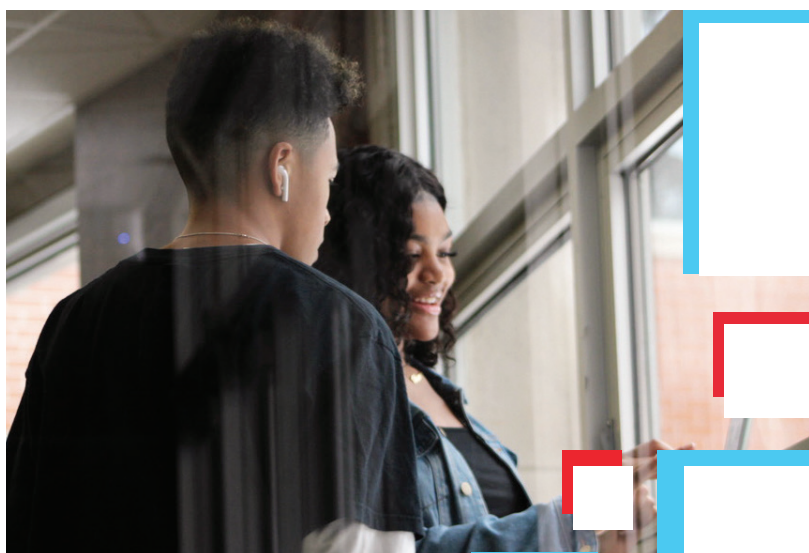




“ I love TikTok. It’s really funny and I’m on it way too much. It’s a cool environment.

Lily Johnson, junior

TikTok makes a meteoric rise to popularity



“ It makes me smile, it’s as simple as that.

Bobby Otto,
teacher



Dances, unique humor create widespread use

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After watching several students make TikToks, teacher Bobby Otto said the app enables students to create and share short, vine-like videos.

“From an older perspective, I would consider it kind of like Vine from when I was in school. It’s just short videos that can be created,” Otto said. “What I have seen from TikTok is people recreating dances with songs in the background.”

According to the New York Times, a Beijing-based company called ByteDance bought the popular karaoke app Musical.ly in 2017 and merged it with their own app, TikTok.

Sophomore Gavin Thoe said he began using the app in Oct. 2018, before the app gained widespread popularity. Since joining TikTok, Thoe has accumulated 27,700 followers.

“At first, it was like a meme because people were using it as a joke and then all of a sudden it blew up,” Thoe said. “It’s been an app that’s fun to watch videos and create videos.”

Although she does not use TikTok, sophomore Maya Frank said she understands the appeal.

“I think it’s crazy that everyone loves it so much, and I can see why. I’ve seen TikToks and they’re funny, but it’s crazy how big it’s gotten,” Frank said.

According to Otto, he enjoys when students ask him to make TikToks, although he has yet to accept the offer.

“It’s reaching out and trying to make a connection with another person, which is kind of cool,” Otto said. “I would say it gets annoying when

people are watching them in class because they have other things that they could be doing besides just watching other people dance.”

According to freshman Estelle Fitzgerald, the meme culture of the app allows some users to work through their emotions.

“My favorite TikTok is when people talk about emotional stuff and they turn themselves into memes,” Fitzgerald said. “I like to use it because I think it’s helpful for social media to understand how they feel.”

Frank said she refrains from using any social media, including TikTok.

“I don’t have any social media, so I don’t want to post pictures or videos of myself,” Frank said. “I think I would be addicted if I had it. A lot of people I know are addicted to it and love it.”

Otto said he often sees students making TikToks in the hallway outside his classroom.

“Where my room is, there is a great hallway that has great sunlight in the afternoon that I get told about all the time. That makes for an excellent space to create these dances,” Otto said. “It makes me smile, it’s as simple as that.”

According to Thoe, the app’s boom in popularity can be credited to its reputation for comedic videos.

“It’s a way you can be creative and it’s just funny videos,” Thoe said. “A lot of stuff is generalized on social media and finding funny videos is something that would get an app to blow up.”

Otto said he enjoys the creativity and happiness involved with making TikToks.

“There’s a lightheartedness to it,” Otto said. “It’s always about making a dance or making someone laugh or being creative, which always leads to more fun.”

“ I’ve seen TikToks and they’re funny, but it’s crazy how big it’s gotten.

Maya Frank,
sophomore

Renegade: Juniors Rochelle Jackson, Evan Nelson and Raven Wilburn make a TikTok during first lunch Feb. 2 in the foyer. The students created their own dance to a popular TikTok song.

Photos Isabel Kjaer